

October 23, 1976

Facts about the investigation of the Thames TV program

An investigation is presently being conducted on behalf of the English affiliate of Philip Morris Inc. at the suggestion of London counsel. A television program entitled "Death in the West" was recently produced by Thames TV of London and broadcast on September 9 throughout the United Kingdom. The program featured excerpts from Marlboro television commercials utilizing western scenes and cowboys and contrasted these cowboys with other so-called cowboys in the American west who were said to be suffering from a variety of lung diseases.

The purpose of the investigation is to determine the veracity of the content of the program which was offered to the British public as a documentary. This type of investigation is part of the normal process that the company employs when there have been accusatory or defamatory statements made about its products in the public media.

The investigators are two attorneys from a Kansas City law firm. They have approached each of the subjects directly, identified themselves and stated exactly what it is they were looking into. Each subject agreed to the interview, and none of them was subjected to any type of pressure to consent nor were they given any compensation. None of the subjects suffered any physical discomfort as a result of the interviews and as far as is known, nearly all of them are in sufficiently good health to be working regularly. There was no kind of surveillance of the subjects and no inquiries were made of friends, neighbors or other persons.

In each case, permission was sought from the subjects to examine their medical records which were in the hands of the medical doctors who participated in the film. In each case, the doctor told the subject he should not grant such permission, and in most cases the doctors refused to discuss with the investigators any aspects of the subject's cases. Each doctor claimed to be contacted by another doctor to locate a patient who "projected a western image" and who could be portrayed as a cowboy on film.

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The main subjects inquired about from the so-called cowboys were the circumstances under which they were induced to participate in the film, the situation in which they were portrayed, their occupations past and present, their understanding of their own physical condition as described to them by their doctors and their past and present smoking habits.

The results of the investigation will be reported by the Kansas City lawyers to London counsel for Philip Morris UK for his evaluation.

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